

**Jenna Russo 00:05**

In spite of the fact that the UN has a mixed track record in negotiating peace, combatants continue to look to the UN to assist them in such processes. Why is this? Is it possible that combatants look to the UN not only to secure peace, but also to deliver other goods? What if peace is not the only goal of the parties sitting around the negotiating table?

**Jenna Russo 00:28**

Welcome to International Horizons, a podcast of the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies that brings scholarly and diplomatic expertise to bear on our understanding of a wide range of international issues. My name is Jenna Russo, and I'm a fellow at the Ralph Bunche Institute at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. Today I'm joined by Anjali Dayal, who is an assistant professor of international politics at Fordham University. She is the author of a new book, *"Incredible Commitments: How UN Peacekeeping Failure Shaped Peace Processes."* She holds a PhD from Georgetown University, and has served as a research fellow at its Institute for Women, Peace, and Security. Thanks for taking the time to talk with us today, Anjali.

**Anjali Dayal 01:14**

Thanks for having me.

**Jenna Russo 01:16**

So let's jump right in. In your new book, you argue that the credible commitment theory, which underpins much of the peacekeeping literature, is insufficient for understanding the role of the UN and peace negotiations. Can you explain to us why this is and how your theory builds on the credible commitment literature?

**Anjali Dayal 01:34**

There's this idea in both the peacekeeping literature and the war termination literature that basically what peacekeepers are doing is upholding an agreement. They're providing information to prevent backsliding and accidents from sort of escalating into full scale war. Now, all of these ideas about peacekeeping rests on this fundamental sort of rationalist assumption that war is really expensive and really bloody. And if you could get what you wanted by other means, you should do that. You should rationally prefer to negotiate and strike a bargain, and settle through some political means that won't cost you the same amount as war.

**Anjali Dayal 02:17**

Now, if we don't see that kind of bargain struck in the world, this is sort of, you know, the traditional rationalist explanation for wars, credible commitment to reward termination. If we don't see that bargain struck in the world, it must be because something is stopping it, it must be because we've got these traditional failures and stumbling blocks that keep us from actually reaching an agreement, because if we're rational, we should want to get what we want, or most of what we want, or at least some of what we want, without killing each other over it.

**Anjali Dayal 02:46**

And if we're not doing that, this theory goes, then it's because of three big bargaining failures. Private information: maybe I know something about my capabilities that you don't know, or you know, something about your capabilities that I don't know, or maybe we don't know how easily it would be for us to get what we want via negotiating or via fighting. Incentives to misrepresent: so, this basic idea related to that, that we may have good reasons to lie to each other about what we can do. The second reason we often talk about as being indivisible stakes, so maybe what we're fighting over can't be divided. Maybe it's one kingdom, maybe it's one seat, maybe it's sort of one set of things that doesn't lend itself easily to division.

**Anjali Dayal 03:32**

And the third big failure is a credible commitment problem. If you've just been willing to kill each other over something, why would you trust the other side to uphold their end of the deal, right? Why would you agree to sign a piece of paper and then demobilize and disarm to each other? That's such a dangerous thing to do in this school of explanation.

**Anjali Dayal 03:52**

And so this last problem, this credible commitment problem, is one that from a policy perspective, people have been innovating sort of solutions to at the civil war level. So maybe the international community could make a guarantee, could make your agreement credible, maybe they could serve as the credible commitment. You don't have to trust the other side, you just have to trust the UN. You just have to be able to believe that you could demobilize and disarm the peacekeepers, and they would protect you. They would trust you; they would keep you from retaliation or from like that moment of vulnerability at the end of the day. And that's the sort of idea that underlies these credible commitment theories of peacekeeping or war termination.

**Anjali Dayal 04:37**

And it's a really sensible idea. You can see how it's supposed to work in the world. And in its best sort of traditional cases, like inter-positional peacekeeping in Cyprus, for instance. That's exactly what peacekeepers are doing. But this idea that I have in the book is that in order for peacekeeping to actually work like this everywhere, peacekeeping can't just be successful, it has to be known to be successful, people have to think that they can actually trust the UN. They actually have to believe that the UN is going to be able to protect them. And we know just from looking around the world, just from reading the newspaper, that that's not the popular perception of peacekeeping. That's not the way people tend to think of peacekeepers.

**Anjali Dayal 05:21**

We have like 14 or 16 big studies now that tell us that peacekeeping is really effective. But if you stopped the average person, the average well informed person, and asked them, "how successful is peacekeeping?" They'd probably laugh. They'd be like, "you know, it's ineffective way to do anything". And so that perception, if that lives in well informed people, it must also live in the parties who are trying to negotiate ends to their wars. And in some cases, these negotiating parties actually have really good reason to believe that the UN can't protect them. They have personal experience with the UN's failures.

**Anjali Dayal 05:59**

And so then the question becomes, what does an incredible commitment provide warring parties? Why would they turn to the UN when they don't think they're going to get this guarantee? Because we know sometimes they don't, they don't think they're going to get a credible guarantee. And they asked the UN for assistance, negotiating their agreement and overseeing the implementation of that agreement anyway. And so that's the sort of motivating question for the book. If we live in a world where we can tell or we can look around the world and look at what the UN is doing and other places, then so too can the parties to negotiation. And then we need a different additional theory of how peacekeeping works.

**Jenna Russo 06:37**

So Anjali, if in fact belligerents are not only looking for the UN to solve this credible commitment problem, you argue that these belligerents may in fact, be seeking different goods or benefits from the UN during the negotiating process. So consistent with the previous literature that you've just described, you do argue in fact that some belligerents might be looking for an end of the conflict, and for the UN to solve that credible commitment problem, but this doesn't represent all groups. So what other types of objectives do belligerents have? And how does the UN's presence in a negotiation process help to facilitate access to these goods?

**Anjali Dayal 07:17**

As you just said, some parties to conflict do just want peace. And that's the sort of traditional picture that we have with the parties who are trying to negotiate ends to war, that they're desperate, they will take peace at any sort of measure, any sort of cost. All they really want is for someone to help them implement the agreement. But if we look around the world, and that's actually not necessarily what we see when we examine negotiation processes very carefully. And when we sort of look at them more carefully, some of the other things that we see that they want, and the things that sort of animate my argument, are distinctive things that only the international community can bring, but that aren't necessarily peace.

**Anjali Dayal 07:58**

So I argue in the book that there are tactical, material, and symbolic benefits that only the international community can bring to particular conflicts that are not peace. So you don't need to believe that the UN will be able to successfully protect you or to successfully uphold the terms of your agreement in order to believe that the UN can help you get these other things. Now, by tactical benefits, I mean things like time to regroup and rearm away from the battlefield that might help you empower sort of factional leaders within your negotiating coalition. By material benefits, I mean things like, you know, sometimes things like a straight economic benefit to elite parties who are settling this conflict. But sometimes also things like state building, which you can't do on your own if you don't have the funds for, or refugee resettlement, which you are not going to be able to manage without significant international assistance.

**Anjali Dayal 08:54**

And in terms of symbolic benefits, sometimes these are things like just the sort of value of airing your grievances in a space where the international community can hear them. But sometimes they're also things like legitimacy, sitting down with the UN, and sort of having international actors on the ground. It's a really good way to certify your good intentions as a political actor, to say that you're someone who favors the consultative process of negotiation, and not just a group of usually men who kill people in the

bush, right? It is a way to say we're legitimate political actors. And you can tell that by the fact that we are here asking the international community to help us uphold the terms of our agreement, or that we're asking the international community to come help us rebuild, or repatriate refugees. That's a legitimising process that you can get from the UN even if you don't think you can get peace.

**Jenna Russo** 09:51

So Anjali, your theory rests on the assumption that belligerents go through processes of learning. So that is what happens in one peacekeeping context is perceived and internalized by belligerents in another peacekeeping context. So in your research, what evidence did you find that belligerents do learn from other peacekeeping contexts? And is there variation in the extent to which belligerent groups are aware of and can internalize events that take place outside of their own environment?

**Anjali Dayal** 10:20

Yeah, that's a really good question. And the sort of, like, trying to figure out where people learn things from is actually a really hard question to answer, it turns out, so I looked in two different places. I looked sort of at the level of UN Security Council, and then I looked within sort of two peace processes: within the Rwandan peace process, from 1990 to 1994, and the Guatemalan peace process from 1989 to 1996. Now at the level of the Security Council, my basic question was that if I didn't see participants to conflicts learning from other cases at the high political level of the UN Security Council, I probably wouldn't see it in other places. I probably wouldn't see it in these sort of messy, complicated negotiation processes where understandably, the thing that's most important is the problem before you in your own country, or in your own region, or in your own sort of set of conflicts.

**Anjali Dayal** 11:14

Now, at the sort of Security Council level, the sort of evidence that people are thinking about other cases when they consider political resolutions to conflict is everywhere. And it is, for example, evident when you hear in 1999, for example, the Secretary General's Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict testify before the Security Council. And this is sort of at the height of the West African cluster of conflicts and the Balkans cluster of conflicts. And he testifies that Sierra Leoneans, at all levels, are remarkably well informed about Kosovo, and about what the international community is doing in Kosovo. And the critical question they have for him is why there are so many resources for Kosovo and so few for Sierra Leone.

**Anjali Dayal** 12:10

And that sort of that sort of juxtaposition shows us that, like, even at the level of the average person, the disparity between these two cases is really important. And it is meaningful, it's a meaningful question to ask, like, "why does Kosovo get so much from you, and we get so little?" That implies a world in which you are aware of what the UN is doing in other places, and able to sort of meaningfully draw that awareness into your arguments about the way your own conflict situation should be treated and should be acknowledged and should be considered.

**Anjali Dayal** 12:51

We see this in more sort of like, dramatic ways as well. So the sort of the 1993 Black Hawk Down incident in Somalia, where the targeting of US soldiers in Mogadishu sort of collapses the mission to

Somalia really dramatically. It's televised, it's globally broadcast. And that becomes a tactic that we see other groups across the world pick up on. So, for example, in a couple of months, or a couple of days later, the USS Harlan County ends up going to Haiti and is greeted sort of on the shore with signs that say 'Welcome to Mogadishu.' And (I'm going to get this wrong - ship or boat) the ship turns around and goes back. And this is something that Boutros Boutros Ghali, the Secretary General at the time, in his memoir says, is a direct way of learning about how to collapse a UN or an internationally led mission. How to essentially say, "we don't want you here." The same thing happens again in Rwanda in 1994. The sort of targeting of Belgian peacekeepers is directly tied to this incident in Mogadishu. The government of Rwanda official that both Kofi Annan and Boutros Boutros Ghali reference at the time basically says "We watch CNN too, we see this happening in the world, we knew that if we targeted the best equipped soldiers in this mission, the mission will collapse." It would take it's sort of most well equipped soldiers home.

**Anjali Dayal 14:29**

And so at that level, at the sort of international level, we see this evidence pretty clearly. It's also for anyone who's ever studied rebel groups who's ever studied this kind of contentious politics, pretty clear that the diffusion of tactics across rebel movements is really common. Explicitly rebel groups learn from each other. This is particularly the case where the conflicts are actually meaningfully linked. So for example, in the West African cluster of cases in the 1990s. Or, for example, in the sort of like, long series of internationalized civil wars throughout Central America, in the 60s, 70s, and 80s and very early 90s. Those are all groups that are in conversation with one another, like explicitly. And so we see that sort of learning happen in very clear ways.

**Anjali Dayal 15:24**

When you turn to peace processes, there you sort of have to look a little more carefully, because again there your primary concern, if you're negotiating then to your remedies, it's usually your agreement. It's usually the terms on which you want your conflict to end. But even there, we often see --in the book, I spend a considerable amount of time on the Guatemalan peace process. And it's one of the two case studies that animate the sort of bulk of the book. And there, what we see is that the parties were negotiating an end to the to the Guatemalan civil war, the government of Guatemala and the rebel group, or the coalition of rebel groups, the URNG in Guatemala, are really concerned explicitly, in ways they talk about, with what the UN has done next door in El Salvador. They are constantly saying between both of them, that those negotiating parties in El Salvador gave up too much, and that they want something different from the UN. And in that sense, the references are explicit and direct, it's really hard to demonstrate things like learning processes. And so I looked for the most explicit direct references I could. So if someone says, "look at what the UN did in El Salvador, we don't want that," then I count that as sort of evidence of learning. So looking for that sort of big bright line sort of set of examples. And it turns out those big bright lines of examples do exist.

**Jenna Russo 16:39**

So let's talk a little bit about your case studies. I want to talk about Rwanda in particular. And often when we talk about Rwanda, we really consider how failures in Rwanda affected subsequent cases. But in your book, you're taking it a step prior to that and looking at how previous cases influenced how the parties perceived the UN's role in the Arusha process. So to start with, what were some of the key

instances of UN peacekeeping failure? I know you already mentioned the US and Somalia that influence belligerents and their attitudes towards the UN's role in facilitating the Arusha process. And what are some of the lessons that you think belligerents in Rwanda learned from observing these previous cases?

**Anjali Dayal 17:47**

When we look at the UN in the early 1990s, then the picture that the combatants sort of sitting down to negotiate these agreements would have had of the world is quite different than the picture of peacekeeping that combatants today might have. There would have been significantly more variation in success and failure today than there would have been for the parties we're trying to negotiate the end of the Rwandan civil war. There, it's a much more sort of limited enterprise, by 1990, 1991, 1992.

**Anjali Dayal 18:20**

And a lot of the examples wouldn't necessarily have been directly applicable, they might not have thought. But even so there are two big cases that seem to shape the course of negotiation, or at least the perceptions of the negotiating parties. The first is, as I mentioned, this failure in Somalia, which demonstrates not just that you could collapse the mission this way, but that the international community's resolution, and their willingness to sort of commit to helping you uphold a peace may not be as resolute as you might like.

**Anjali Dayal 18:58**

The same thing is true of the sort of crisis in Burundi, which happens about the same time as the sort of Rwandan negotiation and implementation of the agreement. And in that case, what combatants seem to learn, or what they say they learn, at least, is that the international community will actually look the other way if you target minorities. And both those things would be cause for concern, if you were committed to ending your war with international systems, or they would be lessons to be learned if you were concerned with sort of breaking your agreement and engaging in genocidal processes. So that's one set of cases that that seems relevant.

**Anjali Dayal 19:46**

The other thing, and this was this was something that I had not really thought about much until I really started to do interviews, is that especially for members of rebel groups in the early 1990s, their most formative experiences with the UN, were during the decolonization period. They thought of the UN as decolonization authority, as the authority who was overseeing the refugee camps they may have grown up in if they were displaced during independence-era violence. And in that sense, those perceptions were largely negative. And they were largely, at least for the parties to the agreement on the RPF side, viewed as being a sort of a history of no support, or too little support, or a history of disappointment. And in that case, this one person I interviewed said, "you know, the whole of my life has been a frustration with United Nations, I don't think I will ever get anything the United Nations that will really serve me appropriately and carefully and well." And so in that sense, you know, the long colonial inheritance of this organization is also something that really shapes the course of how these actors perceive the UN.

**Jenna Russo 21:09**

So let's get back to sort of the central part of your argument a little bit, which is that different groups of actors may be seeking different types of goods or benefits from the UN's presence in these peace processes. So again, in looking at the Rwanda case, you argue that the process comprised these desperate negotiators, who had to settle because they could no longer fight, hardliners that were seeking to pursue tactical material and symbolic goals, and spoilers that were seeking to break the peace. So can you talk to us a little bit more specifically in the Rwandan case about what these different sets of actors were hoping to gain and how the UN's presence may have given them access to these goods?

**Anjali Dayal 21:54**

Classically, the sort of spoiler argument is usually attached to the sort of extremists in the government of Rwanda's negotiating coalition at the time. There are two parties who essentially negotiate the end to the Rwandan civil war. One is the government of Rwanda, which is this big, messy coalition, which is led by a government that's in the process of democratizing, and includes both parties who seem to be genuinely invested in an actual peace and extremists who are committed to a genocidal sort of process of governing Rwanda, committed to the extermination of minority populations and to supremacist rule. And so in that coalition, we have both sort of desperate negotiators who seem really like they know they can't fight this war anymore.

**Anjali Dayal 22:51**

Rwanda in the course of a massive economic crisis. It's been at war for a couple of years at this point, the bottom falls out of the coffee market at one point, which is at the time Rwanda's primary export. All of these things push them to really need to settle this conflict. But there are also key factions of this negotiating coalition, who we see very quickly, after the mission to Rwanda has been deployed, are absolutely committed to breaking the agreement. And whose presence in the negotiating coalition is basically just to serve as spoilers to sort of try and upset any effort to achieve a peace.

**Anjali Dayal 23:36**

On the Rwandan Patriotic Front side, the RPF side, the rebel group that is challenging the government of Rwanda at the time classified them as being hardliners in the sense that they have a set of tactical, symbolic, and material goals that they want to get out of the negotiation process, that they think they are as unlikely they're going to get out of the process of war. But they also don't need to settle at the time. They enjoy foreign backing from other governments, they can withdraw, they're not facing the same existential crisis that the government of Rwanda is at the time. So negotiation becomes a way to pursue goals through that only the international community might be able to help them achieve that are not necessarily peace. And that's not to say that there aren't some members of this coalition who do genuinely want peace, it's also to say that they have other options. There's a bargaining range for them and significantly wider than exists for someone who absolutely needs to strike a peace at any cost.

**Jenna Russo 24:38**

In your case selection, you say that you rely on a most similar case selection strategy in which the cases have as many commonalities as possible. So when comparing the Rwanda case with the Guatemala case, what were some of the similarities that you found between the two cases and how did they differ?

**Anjali Dayal 24:56**

I was looking for two cases that were both done from the perspective of sort of peacemaking and peacekeeping. And that meant they had to be slightly older cases, because you know, if this is something that you pay attention to, then you know that failure is very quick and vivid is the thing that we think of. But success takes a really long time, like for a case to be concluded, it can take 10, 11, 14, 15 years. And so many of the cases that I that we think of today as being sort of peacekeeping successes were still actually ongoing at the time that I started this project, or they had just recently been concluded, or usually look for like a five year window afterwards to see if the sort of peace holds after international actors leave. So I needed to have passed that window significantly. And I also needed cases that would be sort of comparable to one another because the method that I'm using is basically to try and look within processes for evidence of one hypothesis or another.

**Anjali Dayal 26:05**

And so I wanted to say, okay, can I find two cases that share a lot of the same attributes, except that in one case, the parties to conflict have a really good reason to expect the UN won't protect them. And other case, the parties to conflict might have reason to suspect that the UN would protect them. And the Rwandan and Guatemalan civil wars are conflicts that happened about the same time, so they bridge the end of the sort of Cold War, at a time when a lot is happening, a lot is in flux in terms of international conflict resolution. There are comparatively small countries that experienced like convulsive genocides over the course of their civil wars that are specifically designed to target a minority population. And they are countries in which there is enormous international involvement in the negotiation process from the beginning of the process onwards.

**Anjali Dayal 27:01**

Now, from the sort of the Guatemalan perspective, the Guatemalan case is the last settled of the sort of successive Central American complex that are all unified under the same negotiating umbrella, that is heavily invested with UN presence, and with US presence and with groups of friends from all over the world. The Rwandan peace process, today, Rwanda is the paradigmatic case of international difference. And so we don't often think of it as being an internationalized conflict, but it is heavily internationalized conflict, both from the perspective of assistance to the different warring parties, but also in terms of conflict resolution. The international community devoted a lot of attention, and a lot of effort to trying to settle the agreement, or just try to settle the war via agreement. And so both the US and France sent negotiating teams to help broker the end of this conflict.

**Anjali Dayal 28:03**

And those parties, like a lot of the information that we have about the negotiation process comes through those parties. The UN doesn't enter the picture as a sort of key international actor until comparatively late in the negotiation process, because they're trying to figure out who's going to be the guarantor to this agreement. And they are sort of looking around the world and making efforts to figure out who it's going to be, and it ends up being the UN. But UNHCR is sort of written into the foundation of the agreement as well. So there are multiple UN actors involved as well. So that's the sort of comparability I was looking for.



**Jenna Russo** 28:42

I'm just curious. I want to talk about some of your policy findings. But before we get to that, one question I'm wondering about is the extent to which lessons that are learned about one actor might transfer onto other actor groups. So your book is pretty explicitly about UN peacekeeping failures, although we could talk about the US role in Somalia. So to what extent do you think that lessons that are learned by belligerents from observing one group for example, the United Nations, could potentially be transferred to other groups like NATO or the AU [African Union] or individual member states? So in other words, do you anticipate that belligerents' perceptions of one third party actor could be grafted on to a different third party actor that may be involved in future peace negotiations?

**Anjali Dayal** 29:28

Yeah, absolutely. And I think some of the clearest evidence of this is actually the reverse, which is that at the end of the day sometimes it doesn't matter who does the thing. If the UN is on the ground, the UN will be the one who takes the blame for doing the thing. And that's something we see pretty clearly that isn't at all to exonerate the UN's own failures. But you know, sometimes things happen that are not actually the UN's fault, and yet the UN will sort of accumulate the blame because it's an easy scapegoat for these kinds of problems. That said, it is absolutely the case that this kind of process applies to other kinds of actors as well.

**Anjali Dayal** 30:07

The sort of discussion about who should constitute the backbone of the troops that will be in Rwanda eliminates this. The sort of leadership of the mission is really uncomfortable about it being in Belgium, because Belgium has a colonial history in Rwanda, because it is not something they feel comfortable that the parties on the ground are going to accept really well. They are pretty sure that the mission itself will inherit some of the negative perceptions that local actors have about the Belgian presence in the region. It's worth noting that this is a period of time, that's really only like 30 years after decolonization at this point. And so this is a living memory for people. And so they're really concerned about this. And this is like something you see in like Roméo Dallaire's memoir, he talks explicitly about the fact that they're hoping it won't be the Belgians, but once they pass around the hat, it ends up being the Belgians and that's what they thought. We also see this when we think about how parties perceive things like the US' potential role in the region. Or where we see like, today, the way we consider the role of the French, for instance. And so the way people talk about these things we definitely see attached to actors who are not the UN.

**Jenna Russo** 31:42

Let's move on now. I want to get into some of your key takeaways, and maybe how this applies on a policy level. Given that you've spent so much time now studying the UN's role in helping to mediate peace agreements, both for better and for worse, can you tell us some of the ways in which you think that the UN can add value in this area, as well as some of its institutional shortcomings?

**Anjali Dayal** 32:07

I think one thing that becomes really clear in thinking about the UN's role in these cases is that so much of the work that the UN is doing is not security-based. It's not, like the most desirable parts of the UN presence on the ground are not necessarily related to security. And this is something that comes like

clearly to us, or not security in the traditional compellent sense; you're not arriving on the ground and making people do something. The extent to which you're able to provide meaningful security, it's by building trust in the community and by being able to sort of persuade or communicate or talk. And those are things that are not at odds with the traditional understanding of the way peacekeeping works to uphold an agreement, but they don't rest in military force. They don't rest in the idea that what peacekeepers are doing is there to provide you with security.

**Anjali Dayal 33:03**

And this is work that is clear, also, for instance, when you read Lise Howard's book "*Power in Peacekeeping*," which, documents pretty clearly that peacekeepers are doing a lot of things on the ground, and very few of them are related to the military dimensions of their mandate. And so in that sense, things like patrolling, things like talking to various parties on the ground, things like communicating intentions pretty clearly. Those aren't at odds with the traditional way that we understand peacekeeping, but they do constitute, I think, a different picture of what UN peacekeeping is: that of thinking that its weakness, or its shortcomings come from the fact that they don't traditionally resemble military operations, that they're just weak peacekeepers, or that they're just weak military actors. It's a vision of the world that says they're not weak military actors, they're lightly armed diplomats.

**Anjali Dayal 34:01**

And that's a traditional sort of understanding of peacekeeping. So in that sense, a lot of what I think I learned was that this traditional model of peacekeeping in which it's primarily a diplomatic set of tools, is the one that some combatants at least seem to prefer. They want these services, they want the UN's presence in other ways, they want the full apparatus of international assistance. And security is not a key consideration necessarily, in that calculus. And for me at least that indicates that there is both good reason to invest in these other tools, but also real reason to be sort of careful about what other kinds of things the UN can advocate for or, or sort of be involved in, including the fact that so much of agreements focus on security, at the expense of like renegotiating a broader social contract.

**Anjali Dayal 35:10**

And we know from other work on peace agreements that a longer lasting peace agreement is one that is more inclusive, that involves more people that gets more people to sit at the table. And if that's something the UN could push for, right, then we might end up in a world where we're not just sort of settling an elite pacts between actors who want particular things from the UN, but also broadening out a conception of like, who's peace gets represented at the end of the day, of whose voices are amplified at negotiating tables, and what kinds of possibilities the international community has to sort of provide a platform for often excluded actors to be present in these processes.

**Jenna Russo 35:53**

So I just want to touch on one final point. And this one stuck out to me as well, because it's an overlapping area of interest between you and myself in our research, and that is to talk about some of the dangers or drawbacks of UN peacekeeping operations straying into the territory of peace enforcement. So can you talk a little bit about how this connects to your broader theory? And in your view, in your findings, what are some of the dangers of pursuing more militarized approaches to

peacekeeping, as opposed to some of the things that you were just describing in your previous answer?

**Anjali Dayal** 36:27

There is this real push towards more militarized peacekeeping, and especially towards sort of counterterrorism, counter insurgency and stabilization missions, which really end up wrapped up in the logic of like, upholding a particular vision of statehood, while also actively working to counter political forces that try to challenge that statehood, or try to challenge the basis of governance that the state is operating on. If the UN is going to partner with the state to confront insurgents, or rebels, or terrorists, then we have a world where the UN is less able to actually serve as a legitimising actor for parties who might genuinely want to sit down and become legitimate political actors.

**Anjali Dayal** 37:19

And that, to me, is a real like danger of pushing down the sort of counterinsurgency counterterrorism logic. It's obviously something states really like, in the sense that like, everybody has a group of actors that they think of as being counter-insurgents or terrorists against the state. And without trying in any way to sort of affirm or reject the legitimacy of those claims against the state, I want to put on the table that it's very hard for the UN to serve as the actor who's going to bring people to the table and negotiate, if the UN has already demonstrated that it's willing to be the actor who confronts challenges to the state. And that's like, I think, perhaps one of the biggest concerns that I have. If, as I assert in the book, legitimacy is a big part of wanting the UN to sort of help you negotiate an end to the agreement, then this really undercuts that set of tools. But this is also stuff that you've done, like, way more work on than I have. So I would love to know what you think of this.

**Jenna Russo** 38:29

Yeah, I mean, I agree with you. My research on this has been focused in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which is, arguably one of the most militarized UN peace operations. You know, and after years on the ground and doing this, and you look at what the effects have been. I argue, in my research, that there have been many more drawbacks than advantages to this.

**Jenna Russo** 38:54

I think it's tempting to rely on militarized solutions when you have very violent insurgency movements, you see that civilians are dying, and maybe coming in quickly, with military operations may seem necessary to provide some of that immediate stopping power. But what I argue and I would guess you would agree is that when that is not connected to a broader political and peacebuilding process, military operations, in themselves are not the answer to the problem. And in fact, what we see in the Congo is that military operations that were very much skewed in support of the state, have closed the door on that political dialogue, because now the state doesn't really have an incentive to bargain with non-state groups, because it prefers to have military victory over them than to concede on any other aspects.

**Jenna Russo** 39:49

So we see that it bolsters the state but it's not solving the problem. You know, and here we are these years later, and these armed groups' grievances have not been addressed. The violence has not gone down and now with the mission ready to draw down and exit, we don't really see that there have been a

lot of sustainable gains made. So I think, you know, this is a big part of the literature and the conversation right now. I guess the question for me is whether states that are sitting on the Security Council are on that same page, because it seems that military operations have really been viewed by some as sort of a silver bullet to enhance mission effectiveness.

**Anjali Dayal 40:28**

Yeah, and I would really encourage people who are interested in this to pick up your piece from just this month. Is that right?

**Jenna Russo 40:35**

Yeah, I have an article that came out in *Third World Quarterly* last week on militarized peacekeeping lessons learned from the DRC. So please feel free to check it out where I talk about some of these issues in much more detail.

**Anjali Dayal 40:49**

Yeah. And just sort of like to affirm your point, like, even if what we care about isn't necessarily the settlement, isn't necessarily the shape of peace. One thing we know about peacekeepers is that they're pretty good at protecting civilians from like rebel violence, but they're not very good at protecting civilians from state violence. In part because of the complexities of consent, in part because of capacity. Like if you depend on the state's consent to operate, you're going to be less willing to confront the state. And for all those reasons, but we should be really concerned when the sort of the already very statist nature of the UN sort of pushes itself more fully into these interventions. And I think that's something that your piece does a really good job sort of taking a look at.

**Jenna Russo 41:40**

Well, thank you so much for that, Anjali. That's going to be it for today's episode. I want to thank Anjali Dayal of Fordham University for sharing her research and insights. Please be sure to check out her new book, "*Incredible Commitments: How UN Peacekeeping Failures Shaped Peace Processes.*"

**Jenna Russo 41:58**

Remember to subscribe and rate International Horizons on SoundCloud, Spotify and Apple podcasts. I want to thank Hristo Voynov for his technical assistance, and to acknowledge Duncan McKay for sharing his song International Horizons as a theme music for the show. This is Jenna Russo, saying thanks for joining us, and we look forward to having you with us for the next episode of International Horizons.